

REMARKS

Claims 5-7, 9-11, 13-15, and 17-18 are pending in this application. In the Office Action, claims 1-4, 8, 12, 16, and 19-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b); claims 17-18 are allowed; and claims 5-7, 9-11, and 13-15 are objected to. By this Amendment, claims 5, 9, and 13 are amended and claims 1-4, 8, 12, 16, and 19-20 are canceled. No new matter is added.

Entry of this Amendment is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 because the Amendment places the application in condition for allowance (for the reasons discussed herein) or places the application into better form for Appeal should an Appeal be necessary. The Amendment does not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims, does not raise the issue of new matter, and does not raise any new issues requiring additional search and/or consideration since the Amendment is directed to subject matter previously considered during prosecution. Furthermore, the amendments merely cancel the rejected claims and amend the allowable claims into independent form. Applicants respectfully request entry of the Amendment.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's renewed indication that claims 17-18 are allowed and claims 5-7, 9-11, and 13-15 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but are otherwise allowable.

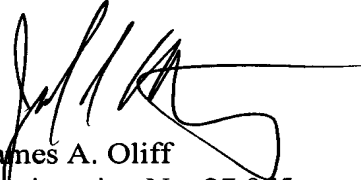
In the Office Action, claims 1-4, 8, 12, 16, and 19-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as unpatentable over Hoshi. Although Applicants do not necessarily agree with the rejection, in the interest of advancing prosecution rejected claims 1-4, 8, 12, 16, and 19-20 are canceled and claims 5, 9, and 13 are amended into independent form. Accordingly, the rejection is moot and must be withdrawn.

Applicants believe that the present Amendment is responsive to each of the points raised by the Examiner in the Office Action, and respectfully submit that the application is in

condition for allowance. Favorable consideration of the claims and prompt allowance of the application at the Examiner's earliest convenience earnestly are solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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JAO:JSA

Date: July 5, 2006

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